

MORALITY

WITH RESPECT TO

THE PRIMARY PRINCIPLES

OF

ACTION.

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THE question has often been asked—what are the sources of human action? And how may these be designated? This question has been variously answered, and it would almost appear as if perfect agreement could never be arrived at. It is not astonishing that a variety of opinions have been expressed on this subject when the number of philosophers whose attention has been directed towards it, the different class of mind possessed by these men, and the various points of view from which they have considered it, is remembered. The thoughts and sayings of a heathen philosopher would naturally be at variance with those of a christian. Then again, the christian philosopher would be sure to differ from the infidel. Examples of this truth will appear, when their different writings are reviewed.

It will not be foreign to our purpose, before giving what are deemed to be, the primary principles of human action, to state some of the views which have been held at different periods, and by different distinguished philosophers on this subject.

Plato being the father of philosophy naturally comes first. In one of his earlier dialogues called *Meno*, this distinguished philosopher considers man only so far as he is guided by reason, and looks upon virtue as so much knowledge possessed. But this opinion was soon abandoned, or rather other sources of human action were allowed, for in a subsequent work (the *Phædrus*), Plato is found representing the soul as carried forward by two steeds, namely, Reason and Passion or Desire. Nor was this the only modification in the philosopher's views, for in some of his earlier works of the Republic, he allows most clearly, three principles, or sources of action, namely, Reason, Desire, and Anger, and even in his later works, he divides and subdivides Desire. Thus shewing that so far from Desire being only one, there are connected with it many springs of action. In the Ninth Book of the Republic, Desire is represented as a beast with many heads.

These views of Plato although they cannot be subscribed to in the present day, at least in their entirety, and without great modification, have not been without their importance, not only from the fact that Plato has had many disciples, but because these views made the basis of the distinction of four important virtues, Wisdom, Courage, Temperance, and Justice.

If the views of Plato had been more comprehensive, less criticism would have been passed upon them than what they have received. Not many writers are prepared to say, that the principles of action as named by Plato are not the chief ones, the general consent of philosophers admits that they are, but that they are not all, that there are other sources of action not comprehended in Plato's division.

This was the objection which Aristotle had to the views already given, that they were defective inasmuch as they were not sufficiently comprehensive. In the *De Anima*, iii. 9, fault is found with those who say that the constituent parts of the soul are Reason, Desire, and Anger, and in connection with the defect complained of a remedy is contemplated; hence we have enumerated by Aristotle, five powers of the human soul, namely, the Vegetative, the Sensitive, the Appetitive, the Motive, and the Intellective. But with respect to this enumeration, it would seem as if the remedy was worse than the disease. The least that can be said is, that this division so far from making the matter more simple, only confuses, and renders it more obscure. Instead of the darkness diminishing, it increases; instead of the cloud passing away it lowers.

How any one can adopt the Aristotelian notion of the powers of the Soul, is a thing to be wondered at, for in the classification already referred to, things are conjoined which are utterly opposed to each other.

Here then are two extremes, on the one hand Plato ascribing too little to the Soul, and on the other, Aristotle ascribing too much.

But although the faults which mark the Aristotelian system are of so grave a character, yet in the middle ages it was generally adopted, perhaps the very confusion in which it was involved, was then its great recommendation. Men with but little of the power of penetration, and whose perceptive faculties are weak, and consequently dull, are as a rule prepared to laud and magnify that which they cannot understand. Let a man mystify what he has to say, and such people are sure to give him credit for great learning, and much profundity of thought. This may be the reason, or rather the excuse why the Aristotelian classification of the powers of the Soul received favour, and was adopted by so large a class of writers during the middle ages. Still it must not be forgotten that so far as concerned ethical speculations, the system of Plato was retained, not indeed in the exact form described at the beginning of this paper. The Platonic system was greatly modified, and to it many additions were made, yet in the main, it is right to say, that ethical writers of the middle ages, were more in favour of the Platonic than the Aristotelian. New names at this period were invented, or rather fresh classifications were made with reference to the powers of the soul. They were now designated, first the Intellectual, second the Irascible, third the Concupiscible, this latter power would be rendered by the Greeks *ἐπιθυμητικόν*, and by Tertullian, *concupiscentivum*.

But even this classification with all its alterations, is not without its objections. It may be charged, as the Aristotelian system was, with uniting things which differ. Desire is made to include Love, whereas Love does not belong so much to Desire as to the Affections, for it is evident that the Love of money, or honour, or fame, is very different in its nature to the Love of a husband, or of a wife, or of a child; you cannot speak of this latter love as being merely a Desire directed towards some external thing as you can of the former, it is more than this, it is an affection towards a person. In this arrangement, the Desires and the affections are regarded as synonymous, at any rate there is no special place appointed for the affections.

Then again there is no distinction made in this system between the various Desires which pertain to Man, but before a system can be perfect, it must observe this distinction, for it is marked and important. There are Desires which are purely of a physical nature, as for instance, the Desire for food, or drink, or sleep, these are called Appetites. Then again there are Desires which are of a mental nature, as the Desire for promotion or gain. Now these ought never to be confounded with the former, inasmuch as they are distinct and separable. And if it be so with the Desire of promotion or gain, it is even more so with that of knowledge, or society. No one can ever represent these Desires as pertaining to the bodily nature of man. But this distinction is not so much as acknowledged in the system which is now being considered. It is evident therefore that this, as well as the Platonic and the Aristotelian, is defective.

From what has been advanced, not forgetting the various modifications which have been suggested, the four following powers of the Soul have been discovered, namely, Bodily Desires, Mental Desires, Affections, and Reason.

This arrangement was greatly in vogue in England during the last century, and was prominently set forth by nearly all Scotch writers whose attention was directed towards this subject. It is true it was not adopted verbatim, the Mental Desires, for instance, were simply called Desires, yet the four principles of action just named, were essentially those which found favour and support, both in Scotland, and England, among the best and ablest writers on Christian Ethics.

The late Dr. Reid, and Dugald Stewart, give substantially the same analysis of man's powers. In some details these writers differed from the men to whose views allusion has just been made. The Mental Desires, on which Dr. Reid wrote with great distinctness, are by him regarded as the following.—the Desire of Power, of Esteem, and of Knowledge. These he regarded the original and natural springs of action, whereas other Desires, (such as that of wealth,) were considered as acquired.

Dugald Stewart gives a somewhat different arrangement of the Desires, namely, the Desire of Knowledge, of Society, of Esteem, of Power, and of Superiority.

Now the question arises—did Reid and Stewart intend to give a complete enumeration of the principles of human action? If so, I cannot but think that they failed in their attempt, that the process of analysis was not pursued to its legitimate ends, nor made to answer its legitimate purposes. The Love of Power is made to include many other Desires which do not properly belong to it, such as the Love of holidays, and various pleasures which are sought during the period of youth, and even during more advanced periods of life. Also, the Love of intellectual advancement, of high station, and influence, of eloquence as speakers, of renown as warriors, of great acumen as scholars, &c., &c.

But while it may be objected to the Love of Power being so generally treated, being made to include more than it logically does, yet it is of so wide an import that there is hardly any action performed on the part of man, in connection with which thought is exercised, in which the Love of Power may not in some way or other, be allowed to have a place, yet such a classification of the principles of action, is certainly not the best that can be made, taking into consideration in connection with these principles, the rules which morality lays down with reference to them, which is the great purpose sought to be attained by the writing of this paper.

I cannot but think that a logical arrangement of the principles of human action would allow that the Desire of Property is in itself a distinct principle, and not included as some philosophers imagine in the Desire of Power. For look at some animals, they have their natural appetites for food, but in addition to these, you see a Desire to lay by in store, and yet you cannot say that this springs from the Desire of Power. It is true when things are looked upon as belonging to us, as so much property of our own, that there is in connection with this view, an exercise of the mind. Hence it is that such a Desire may be designated a mental one.

After carefully reading over, and thinking upon the various arrangements of man's primary powers, which have been given, the following appear to be the best.

The Desire of Property,	
„	Personal Security,
„	Marriage,
„	Civil Society,
„	Mutual Understanding.

With regard to the first, reference has already been made

With regard to the second, it is everywhere made manifest. Man as a mental being thinks, and calculates. He sees another man stronger than himself, perhaps the stronger has been roused by some grievous wrong inflicted upon him by the weaker, or perhaps he is given to jealousy, or is of a revengeful disposition, in any of these cases, the weaker has cause to be alarmed. He fears that blows may be given, that harm may be done. Now whence does this fear arise? Undoubtedly from the Desire of personal safety. Again suppose that there is a gang of thieves in the neighbourhood, what influence has this upon those who reside there? Does it not lead them to use every precaution? The windows are fastened, the doors are bolted and barred, and perhaps a vigilant watch is kept night by night. The precautionary measures which are adopted, whatever they may be, are only so many illustrations of this second primary spring of action, the Desire of Personal Safety.

With regard to the third primary spring of action, namely the Desire of Marriage, or as it may be differently worded, the Desire of Family Society, one has hardly any need to refer to it further, seeing that it is so abundantly illustrated. Still it is not totally unnecessary so to do. Turning first to the brute creation—germs of this Desire are there seen, not indeed among those animals which are designated gregarious, for their instincts are distinguishable from those which pertain to such animals as associate together in pairs. Going to the latter kind, the male is found seeking the company of the female. There is in human beings a Desire kindred to this, which is witnessed in matrimonial engagements, and in marriage contracts. It is true that in man this Desire is of a nobler character than in the brutes of the field, and although even in man it may be looked upon as a Bodily Desire, yet it cannot be looked upon in that light merely. There are thoughts, feelings, and associations awakened, that it is as it were transformed from a Bodily to a Mental one.

The fourth primary principle of action is a Desire of civil Society. Reference has already been made to the gregarious animals, and to the instincts by which they are

impelled. Again, turning to them, it may be asked—Is there not in man something resembling these? Only of a grander character, and on a higher scale. I will not speak of man as a gregarious animal, but in the words of Aristotle, as a social one. It would be degrading to man to speak of his Desire, for civil society as being nothing more than the instinct previously alluded to. There are so many things interwoven with it, and its attainment, such as laws, institutions, interchange of thought and opinion, &c., that in one sense there is not the least resemblance to this in the instincts of gregarious animals, yet if you look upon this Desire in its lowest form, leaving out of account its high development as witnessed in man, you have some resemblance, a resemblance which you cannot fail to see. But while this is admitted, it is equally true, that just as man is higher than the brute, so is his Desire for civil Society higher than the gregarious instincts to which allusion has been made. It is higher in its nature, and higher and nobler in the joys and pleasures which it creates.

The fifth primary principle of human action is a Desire of a mutual understanding. On this understanding it may be affirmed most of our happiness for the future depends. How would it be possible for any hopes to be formed if this were not established? And what is it that gives to man nerve and energy? Which impels him forward in one course of action after another, and buoys up his spirit amid the trials and disappointments, which fall to his lot? It is hope. But if you destroy the mutual understanding which binds society together, you take away the foundation on which most of our hopes rest, and thereby effect the destruction of a large amount of man's happiness. If the traveller had no prospect of reaching the place of his destination, he would have but little Desire, and less power to prosecute his journey. It is the hope of reaching the place whither he is bound, which urges him forward, and the brighter his prospects, the firmer and quicker will be his step. So it is in life, that which allures man onward, is the prospect by which he is surrounded.

The man of business makes his calculations, that if he is as successful in the future, as at present, he will acquire a princely fortune. But on what does this prospect rest? Why, upon promises and contracts; and on what do these rest but upon a mutual understanding? Let there be no such understanding, and of what use would be a promise or a contract? There would be no guarantee that the one would be fulfilled, or the other complied with. Now what has been stated, applies to the whole of our duties to men, and to our general dealings among men, that which gives us confidence in one another, on which we venture to transact business, and on which we have reason to hope that justice and right will be dealt out to us, is a mutual understanding. The continuance of social life, as well as its beginning, depends upon this, so that we not only see its importance, but are led to rejoice in it, as lying at the basis of all real and vigorous action. Such then, are the primary principles of man's constitution. Of course there are others. Dr. Reid was quite right in saying that the Desire of Power, and of Esteem, and of Knowledge, are principles of action, but they cannot be regarded as of an elementary character. It is true morality deals with these as well as with the more primary, but these are not the first principles that Morality has to deal with. The five which have been enumerated are the most general and the most prominent—they are, original, they are primary. Hence, first of all, Morality has to direct her attention to these. It cannot be said that Morality has been remiss in her duty, so far from this, she has discharged that duty faithfully and well. For these primary principles she has primary laws, she lays down her rules with a clearness and a simplicity which give to them an importance that can hardly be over-estimated, and should her rules be observed, these principles will be controlled and governed, a proper check will be received where that is required, and a strong impetus will be given, where that will be of value.

The law which Morality lays down for the guidance of the first principle is, "Thou shalt not steal," for the second, "Thou shalt not kill," for the third, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," for the fifth, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," and the rule for the fourth is implied in the giving of these rules, for let these be observed, and the right kind of Society, the right kind of government will be secured.

That these laws are necessary will be admitted by every one who is at all acquainted with the history of the world, with the wrongs and injuries under which Society suffers, and especially are they admitted by the jurist who has fully acquainted himself with the first principles of human action. Not only is the necessity of these laws admitted, but

their priceless value, when their operation is witnessed. Look at the first mentioned, "Thou shalt not steal." Mark its application to property. It has been shewn that this Desire is a primary one, that there is deep in man's Soul a Desire for that which can be called his own, and that the value of the law which applies to this principle might be seen it is only necessary to call to mind how this principle would act if there were no such law. Can it be imagined that legitimate means would then be used, and always used for the attainment of that which was Desired? Would not injustice be practised? Would not the rights of our fellows be violated? For there would then be no controlling influence, nothing either to check or guide. The Desire of Property would then be like an unbridled horse, it might in a moment rush into dangerous regions, disfigure its own form, spoil its beauty, and produce commotion and injury wherever it went. Whereas this Desire now may be kept in check. The moral law, "Thou shalt not steal," may act in regard to it, like the bit and the bridle of the horse. It is not possible to conceive of a more appropriate rule being given than this one, for certainly when its spirit is caught, when its full meaning is apprehended, and when its utmost lengths are followed, Man can have no difficulty in ascertaining what is the right thing to be done in the pursuit of wealth.

But this law not only tells men how Property is to be acquired, but how it is to be maintained. It is this law which throws about Property a hedge, which prescribes its limits, which warns the transgressor not to trespass beyond his own province, which gives to people their proper title deeds, that institutes certain rights which men ought to observe. Were it not for this law, men would be at a loss to know what really was and was not their own. But now they know this, they know the difference between a legal and an illegal right, between a genuine and a counterfeit. They know wrongs from rights.

It need hardly be said that the laws of all civilised countries, which have reference to Property, are founded upon this grand moral maxim, "Thou shalt not steal." The spirit of this law is "Thou shalt not fraudulently take away that which belongs to another." The Jurist is always anxious to know what says Morality, then can he lay down a true basis on which real action is to rest. It is then that he proceeds with definitions as to what is right, and what is wrong. Knowing the rule which God gave to the Israelites on this matter, he can explain as to what constitutes its violation, he is prepared to receive in part, if not in the whole, the definition of Blackstone on the Sin of Stealing, which is "a taking or removing of something; being the Property of some other person and of some value; without due consent (to be separately defined) with intent to despoil the owner, and fraudulently appropriate the thing," or as it is stated by Roman Jurists "*Furtum est contrahatio fraudulosa, lucri faciendi causa, vel ipsius rei, vel etiam ejus usus possessionisve.*" Either of these definitions is almost as good as can be given, at least for all practical purposes, and yet neither is sufficiently comprehensive to embrace every kind of theft. Both definitions view the thief as seeking to gain his ends by violent measures, but there are other ways of thieving beside these. Men violate the moral law when they defraud. Forgery is a violation of this law, which by the Romans was called *crimen falsi* "*Sex Cornelia de falsis panam irrogat ei qui testamentum aliudve instrumentum falsum scripserit, signaverit, recitaverit, subjecerit; vel signum adulterinum fecerit, sculpsit, expresserit, sciens, dolo malo.*"

But without referring to all the ways in which it is possible to defraud a fellow-creature, suffice it to say, that they are all summed up in the one word cheating. Not being the object of the writer either to give the various distinctions of the several sins which are included in theft, such as the distinction between *Latrocinium* and Trespass, or to consider the distinction between the various Rights which are held, such as the difference between *Res Singulorum* and *Res Publica*, or between *Res communes* and *Res Nullius*, or between *Corporal* and *Incorporeal*. He satisfies himself by stating, that theft, whatever be its form, in whatever aspect it presents itself, is by this one rule, "Thou shalt not steal," prohibited and condemned, and that all legitimate Rights with regard to Property, are hereby created and maintained.

The second law which Morality lays down, and which has reference to the Desire of Personal Safety, is, "Thou shalt not kill." Man instinctively longs for security. He likes to feel that he is free from any alarming circumstance that might happen, that there are no grounds for apprehension that his life is in danger, that he can remain in the house or go out into the street, feeling that no man dares or desires to lay upon him violent hands. Take from man the confidence of Personal Safety, and he becomes

at once the victim of disquietude and alarm. His peace of mind even at home is distracted, not to speak of his agitation in the street when alone and unarmed.

There can be no doubt that this Desire of Personal Security is a primary principle of action, and that the law which guides and controls this is, "Thou shalt not kill." Any attempt to put our life in danger, whether that attempt be made by ourselves or others, is a violation of the law just named. Of course the law has certain limitations, and if the Bible is consulted, which is the depository of all moral law, it will be found what these are. For instance, the life of animals may be taken away, when either they are required for food, or have become dangerous. In Gen. ix, 3, it is written, "Everything that moveth shall be meat for you, even as the green herb have I given you all things." And in the same chapter it is said, "Surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man."

Then again the life of man under certain circumstances may be taken away. Is a man attacked by a highway robber? Does the robber threaten to take away his life? And is the man sure that the threat will be carried out? Then would he be justified on the ground of self-defence, in taking away the life of the thief. The law of this country (England), which is founded upon the great law of the Bible, sanctions such action. For what is it on the man's part but a struggle for Personal Security? Upon defensive warfare the blessing of God has ever rested. Think how God aided the Israelites when they were defending themselves against the assaults of Midian, Amalek, the Philistines, and others. But without seeking further to authenticate the justice of defensive war, the reader is referred to Ex. xxii. 2, where he will find it stated "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." From this passage it is clear that the act of killing the thief was allowed on the ground of self-defence, and by parity of reason, this warrant extends to all cases which in substance, may be compared with the above.

One other restriction which may be named, is, when a man has committed Murder, Murder being "Homicide with a previous intention," or as it is sometimes called "Malice prepense." To prove the right of this restriction, the ix. chapter of Gen. must again be referred to, where it is said "Who so sheddeth Man's blood, by Man shall his blood be shed." It is not forgotten that this statement has been called in question by those who desire the abolition of capital punishment, but to many it seems most explicit, and had the writer time, or did it enter at all into his object, he would discuss what has been said both pro and con upon this subject; as it is, the passage must be left to be considered by the reader himself. These being the limitations of the law, it would appear that under any other circumstances, should life be taken away, it is violated. It matters not whether life be directly or indirectly destroyed, the crime is all the same. You may set fire to a house with the full intention of destroying the occupant, or you may shoot a man dead upon the spot, you are in either case guilty of murder.

But as there cannot be two opinions about the sin of murder, one or two modes of taking away life, the wrong of which has been questioned, will now be considered.

The first is that of Duelling. How this can be justified, or how it can be made to appear that it is not forbidden by the moral precept, "Thou shalt not kill," seems incredible; for when a duel is entered upon, is not the design formed to take away human life? And are not efforts put forth to accomplish this? Then further, the challenger has time for deliberation. He does not enter upon the struggle in a moment, he has time for reflection. These circumstances add to his guilt, they constitute him a murderer. Moreover, a duel is often entered upon in a spirit of revenge, and the greatest preparations are made so that the ensuing struggle may be a successful one. Hence the allegation is made, that the duellist is a violator of the law which seeks to preserve in perfect security the life of man. To this allegation the duellist replies, that his anguish is so great, that he could not bear it, unless he put away the life of the Slanderer. But what is this reply? It is only a subterfuge for the anguish which he feels has been voluntarily created by himself. It is only a little injured pride. If he has really been wronged, he can find redress by an appeal to those who are in authority, so that to speak of unbearable anguish as the justifying cause for murder, is to give the weakest, and most unsatisfactory reason for the commission of the greatest of all sins.

In addition to duelling, suicide must be mentioned, inasmuch as both have been equally forbidden. It seems strange that any one should attempt a defence of this latter crime, and yet, an attempt has been made by no less a person than Mr. Hume.

This writer plainly stated that man had the right to dispose of his own life, that life is held according to the pleasure of the Individual. "Men," he says, "are intrusted to their own judgment and discretion, and may employ every faculty with which they are endowed, to provide for their ease, happiness, or preservation." The falsity of this statement may be easily seen. Men have something else to do than merely seek their own ease and happiness. They have to glorify God. They have to prepare themselves by the exercise of their present faculties, for a nobler state of existence. Not only may this be argued from the Bible, but from human consciousness. Man *feels*, in spite of his incredulity, that he is now in a position for being disciplined for something better, and higher, than what he at present enjoys. To say, as Hume has done, that "The life of man is of no more importance to the universe than the life of an oyster," or to say that "if we fall upon our sword, we receive death at the hands of Deity, just the same as if it had proceeded from a lion, a fever, or a precipice," is to say that which is so manifestly false, that no answer need be given. All that need be said is, that the suicide cuts short the life which God has given, he hurries himself into the presence of the Eternal, and thereby deprives himself of any time to repent. In other words, he secures his own damnation, for he acts in direct oppositon to the written law of God. It is evident from what has been said, that wilful murder, duelling, suicide, and anything which interferes with the life of man, is strictly forbidden and condemned by the all important rule, "Thou shalt not kill." It is by inducing men to conform to this law, that man's Desire for Personal Safety is gratified, and his happiness thereby secured.

The third principle of action is the Desire of Family Society, or Marriage. This Desire, is perhaps as deep and strong as any which have been considered, and when its operation is marked, the wretchedness and misery to which it would lead were it not regulated by some moral law from God, are at once seen. Social peace, order, and happiness, would be at an end, and the Desire itself which under proper control leads to happiness, would then become the great enemy of all that can produce the social welfare of man. But a law has been given, Morality has uttered her voice with clearness and distinctness on this point; her language is, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." That is, "Thou shalt keep the marriage vow inviolable." The Desire in itself for the marriage union, is right and proper, but, the union being once formed, rights are established which neither party ought to violate, and these rights are founded upon the moral precept just referred to.

It has been affirmed, that the Desire of Family Society is a proper one, and this is evident when it is remembered that marriage has its origin in God. "For this cause," says God, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Important ends have to be gained by marriage, such as the pro-creation of children, social and educational advantages to be enjoyed by them in connection with parental control, the prevention of fornication, the mutual society, help and comfort of the sexes, the good government of society at large, the encouragement of industry, and other equally beneficial objects, so that all other things being equal, the marriage state is to be encouraged.

As has been observed, when this state is entered upon, certain rights are established which are called the rights of marriage. Both parties understand that they must faithfully keep to each other as long as they both shall live, that is, that they shall neither be guilty either of the sin of seduction, incest, polygamy or adultery. By committing these sins, the great ends of marriage are defeated; but Morality, as if anxious to make marriage what it was intended to be, a blessing to the world, and a comfort to those who enter upon it, hath in the simplest of terms, given the word of command which all married people are bound to observe, namely, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Now supposing that no such law had been given, man would have been at a loss to ascertain the sacredness of the marriage rights; nay, he would have been totally ignorant as to the nature of the rights themselves. But the law has been given, and in the influence which it exerts upon society by its clear and faithful utterances, there have been undeniably condemned those wrongs which are perpetrated where its voice is not heard. Look at a christian community—see there how sacredly the marriage contract is preserved—how all its rights are guarded with vigilance and care,—and the true blessedness of the marriage state secured. Contrast such a community with one composed for the most part of barbarians. In the latter, you see confusion, disorder, an utter want of regard for that which is proper, for that which is wise, for that which can bring happiness, peace, and stability. The question is instantly asked,

how comes this to pass? Why is marriage so thoroughly blessed in the one case, and so entirely abused in the other? In the christian community there is so far as social order is concerned, everything that can be desired; whilst in the other, this is entirely wanting. A discovery like this leads to a search, to a most diligent examination as to the causes which have produced the effects, which are so varied in the two communities. The result is, that a great moral law is found, working in all its efficiency at the command, and under the control of God, in that community where there is so much order and happiness; whilst in the other, no such law is found.

And that peace, order, and happiness, in connection with the marriage state, are attributable to this law of God is evident, when the former social condition of a nation is remembered, in which there is the operation of this law now. It may be difficult to estimate the various influences which have been at work in that nation, with which its present efficient and exalted position is interwoven; but to shew that these influences have not had their origin in a truly sound Morality, would be even more difficult still. The writer therefore assumes what is all but self-evident, that the various measures which have been introduced, and the various laws which have been enacted whereby the marriage union has been rendered blessed, have each and all their origin in christian morality. This being taken for granted, we have but to examine what we see that we might be penetrated with the conviction as to the great importance and worth of moral law. The question arises—what do we see? We see that a complete marriage has ever been the union of one husband and one wife so long as they both have lived. It is true that the nature and extent of the Marriage Rights have varied in different countries, and at different ages of the world. Men have not always risen in their conceptions and regards, to the sublimity of a perfect conjugal union. There has been seduction, incest, polygamy, and adultery, but all this only shews how imperfectly the moral rule has been understood, and how little its clear dictates have been heeded.

That Morality is not to be blamed for this, remember what was the state of things at the beginning—one wife, not many, was given to Adam. It was not until Morality began to be set at naught, that men took unto themselves more wives than one. And it is worthy of remark, that although Solomon was guilty in this matter, yet in the book of the Proverbs, he always speaks of a good wife as sole Mistress, and as being the object of an affection which none of the others received. But it may be objected that Moses allowed the jews more wives than one, although he prohibited many. To this it must be replied, that Moses on this occasion conceded rather to existing practices than sanctioned by law what was now permitted. So far from sanctioning this, he elsewhere condemns it, if not directly, yet by implication. For what says the tenth commandment? “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife.” Observe wife is here used, not *wives*. Now if Moses had sanctioned more wives than one, it is probable that the plural would have been used instead of the singular, so that the law itself is clear, whatever under existing circumstances was allowed. This law was understood, and to some extent acted upon by the Greeks. This is apparent from the writings of Homer, for the Heroes which he introduces, never seem to have had more wives than one, although they are said to have *lived* with *παλλακαί*.

The Roman law is in strict harmony with that of Moses, which is “*Nuptia, sive matrimonium, est viri et mulieris conjunctio, individuum vite consuetudinem constituens*,” or as it is sometimes defined to be, “*Consortium omnis vite; divini et humani juris communicatio*.”

The law of England is in still greater harmony with that of Moses; accordingly the man and woman are regarded as one person. The woman is designated, “*a femme-covert, femina viro co-operta*,” and her condition by marriage is her “*Cverture*.”

Now the laws of nations which have been referred to, without enumerating any others, are sufficient to shew the influence of the moral law, for they all have their origin in that law. It is not for the writer to describe what would have been the laws of nations, had not God spoken with clearness on this matter in the decalogue; but it is easy to suppose that they would have had no affinity with those which are now in existence. Aye and further, the supposition is beyond the province of doubt, that the marriage union would in no case have been so pleasant and blessed as it now is, both to individuals, and to the community at large. Conjugal peace, conjugal sacredness, and all the advantages connected with marriage, are owing to the all important law of Morality “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

The fourth primary principle of action, is, the Desire of civil Society. Observation clearly shews that man, as man, could not exist apart from such society. He must live under the sway of certain rules of action, in other words, he must live in connection with the exercise of civil government. Now although Morality has not laid down any specific rule with reference to this principle, as she has with reference to the foregoing, yet her dictates are known through the other rules which have been brought under review ; for let these be observed, and the rights of civil government will be ascertained and thereby man's Desire for civil society, will be legitimately gratified. Man will obtain what he Desires, so far as the Desire is pure, and where it is not, his error will be detected.

The sins which Morality seeks to guard mankind against in connection with proper government, are Rebellion, Treason, and Sedition. No man who acts under the influence of Morality, will ever say that it is right either to rebel, or to be guilty of treason, or sedition. His own consciousness will supply him with arguments why he should not be guilty of these crimes, which consciousness is produced, by the influence of Morality upon the heart ; so that the moral law which bears upon this point, must be known, although it is not explicitly stated, it is known to be implied in all the others which have been delivered. And its influence is easily seen in the Rights of Government which have been secured. If, therefore, it be shewn what these Rights are, it will be apparent how Morality has acted, and is acting still, upon this fundamental desire for civil society.

The first indication of these Rights, is witnessed in the family. Early in life we learn to render honour to whom honour, and tribute to whom tribute. We recognise an authority which has been brought into existence by God. The very recognition of that authority leads to obedience. It is true, there may be obedience where no such authority is recognised, as when one brother obeys another, but, this obedience is of another kind, it is one that is founded upon affection, and not upon a sense of justice, as in the other case. It is the obedience which is founded upon a sense of justice, which is called forth by the sentiments of morality in other words, by the influence of morality, the Rights of a father, as the governor of a family, are made to be recognised and regarded. In the nation, we have a similar supreme authority, only in a wider sense. That authority may be vested in one person, in that case it is Monarchical, or, it may be vested in a few men of rank and position, in that case it is aristocratical, or it may be vested in the general public, in that case it is democratical. But, however, this authority may vary as to its form, it is one to which we submit, because we recognise and allow its Rights. This submission on our part is the result of moral teaching and influence.

From what has been said, it is evident that morality does not trouble itself so much about the form of government as about its character. It secures good government in every case where its power is felt, and renders the governed more and more susceptible of good and salutary impressions, for as Dr. Paley has remarked in his auxiliary evidences of christianity, "Morality tends to make men virtuous, and it is easier to govern good men than bad men under any constitution."

"It states obedience to government in ordinary cases, to be not merely a submission to force, but a duty of conscience."

"It induces dispositions favourable to public tranquillity, a christian's chief care, being to pass quietly through this world to a better, he prays for communities and their governors, of whatever denomination, with a fervency proportioned to their influences upon human happiness."

Now if morality does what Dr. Paley says, and we know that it does, then are we assured that christian morality secures for man what he instinctively desires, namely, civil society in its best and highest form.

When this state of things exists, there can be no offence against the Rights of government. Rebellion, treason, and sedition are unheard of ; there is loving and loyal subjection to the powers that be, and the happiness which is sought is obtained. All this arises from that sense of justice, which is created and perpetuated by sound morality. How well, therefore, has it been observed by one distinguished moral philosopher, "moral ideas, and the sentiments combined with them, have great force among the springs of action, and thus the opinion generally prevalent, that any person or body of persons does or does not possess the government of a nation *de jure*, will

very materially effect the support and obedience which men will render to it, and will thus determine the historical fact of its standing or falling. The existing government is a fact, but it is a fact determined by the previously operating idea of justice. Its power rests on the general opinion of its authority. Might does not make right; the opinion of Right makes might; and the might thus generated determines all subordinate questions of Right." The last primary law which has to be considered, and which has reference to the Desire of a mutual understanding is, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." It has been already intimated, that a mutual understanding rests upon promises and contracts, but promises and contracts to be of any value, must have their origin in truth. Truth must be the foundation on which they rest. Hence the necessity and appropriateness of the rule, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." It is, as if morality said, let truth predominate, in order that a thorough mutual understanding may be established. But, the question may arise, what is truth? To this question philosophy replies:—"Truth in its vague Theoretic form is the expression of things, and the relations of things in words"—"It is an account of the real state of things." Truth also implies veracity, or a determination to speak the truth, and when the advantages which veracity secures, are remembered, its importance can hardly be over-estimated. It is the foundation of all true confidence, and confidence is the great bond of society, so that without veracity, there can be no true union among men. The truth must be spoken, if confidence is to be established, and without confidence, there can be but little happiness, nay, there will be absolute misery. Without confidence, the ruler cannot enforce his laws, nor can he insure obedience. Veracity, is not only the foundation of all confidence, but the source of the highest personal good. It is the basis of an honourable reputation. It is that which adds dignity to the character, and leads on to usefulness in the life. Now truth, and the disposition to speak the truth, are inculcated in the precept, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," and while these are inculcated, there are sins which are clearly prohibited, namely—lying and slander. To lie, as is well known, is to make a statement, or a promise, with an intention to deceive, so that there are included under this head, promise-breaking and perjury. A man makes a promise with the deliberate intention of never fulfilling it. Under these circumstances he lies, and helps to destroy that mutual understanding after which man instinctively longs," a promise being an engagement to do, or to abstain from something, either absolutely or conditionally. When we make a promise, we bind ourselves to fulfil it, according to its spirit. Morality not only encourages this, but strictly commands it. With regard to perjury, it may be defined as follows:—"A false declaration either of present or future facts, wilfully made, accompanied by an oath." Now, if promise-breaking and perjury, be what they have been represented to be, it is clear that so long as men are guilty of either, there can be no true mutual understanding.

The same applies to slander, to "that conduct which injuriously lessens or destroys another's reputation." Take away the fair fame of your neighbour, and you not only inflict an injury on him, but upon yourself, and there is a sense in which you injure the world at large. But morality forbids this, she says distinctly, that lying, and slander are evils to be avoided, and that truth in the heart, and in the mouth, are virtues to be desired and cultivated. "Thou shall not bear false witness." Here then is the law for the establishing and perpetuating of the mutual understanding which is one of the primary principles of action.

Nor is the law without effect, whenever truth is spoken and acted upon then have we undeniable evidence of the power of morality, and whatever be the amount of mutual understanding which has been established, in that proportion has moral law operated. That such an understanding exists, is evident from the many promises which men are constantly making, and the contracts to which they are ever agreeing. Business is being transacted between one individual and another. Goods are sometimes disposed of, without any equivalent at the time being received, beyond a mere promise of payment, and yet in many cases, no fear is entertained as regards the result. If the question be asked, how comes this to pass? The answer is forthcoming. Because of the mutual understanding which morality has established. And what applies to individuals applies to nations. The amount of confidence which one nation reposes in another, is regulated by a mutual understanding. Destroy this understanding, and all interchange of commodities would cease.

But it may be objected that international law is our safe-guard, that nations bind

themselves by *law* to fulfil certain promises, and that without law, no nation or government would dare to trust another. All this may be true, and to an extent it is, but the question arises—On what does international law rest? For it must be admitted, that before it can be of value, it must have something firm on which to rest. Now that something is undoubtedly a mutual understanding, so that whether you look at individuals or nations, whether you examine the contracts which are made between man and man, or the public dealings which one nation has with another, you have ample proof that such an understanding as that which is now contended for, has been established. And in the establishment of this understanding, there is abundant evidence of the wisdom with which Morality has acted. For hereby one of the elementary needs of man is supplied, and to it a true bias and direction are given.

Such is the province of Morality, so far as the elementary springs of action are concerned; would that no enemy was induced to destroy it. Such are her clear dictates; would that they were always and everywhere heard. Such is her great power; would that wherever it is needed, it were felt. Then would the primary principles of action be controlled and governed, man would attain to that dignity and honour, from which, by the downward tendencies of his nature, he has so long been kept, and the full enjoyment of virtue would become the happy portion of all.

FINIS.

